

Keynote Speech Outline

Notes: 39years-young Brotherhood

Theme: Empowerment, brotherhood, purpose & future

Thank you so very much for these kind words and generous introduction, being here makes me feel very much at home emotionally!! Be assured that I am perfectly aware of the risk that we are now “conquering” the South the Lambda way!

Brothers, family & guests...

The challenge of success is not failure, but enhancing it year-by-year. So before going any further, I would like to congratulate the leaders on the National Executive Board for meeting the challenge. Special thanks go to President Jose Grajales, Executive Director Jarrod Cruz, Information Director Brian ??? and Coordinator of the Brotherhood Conference, ???????? for organizing this excellent and successful 39th year's fraternal anniversary celebration. You can calculate how old I was in 1975 by taking away 39 from 72=33.

This is a very happy moment for me to take part in the success that our Latino Brotherhood has become since the early days at Kean College, and to share with you some insights about the future. As the surviving Fraternal Father, I would like to take a moment of personal privilege to remember my dear friend and conspirator, Dr. Cayetano (Chacho) Socarras.

I think that if Chacho was here right now in body (he is here in spirit), he would be very gratified and impressed with our growth and progress. As all Brothers know, Chacho was the main influence in the

creation of our shield and contributed important ideas for establishing other principles. Perhaps not as well known is the brilliant legal help he provided to present the best constitution document of Lambda Theta Phi to the Greek Council for the approval of the fraternity. The template he used was so good that the Greek Council adopted it as the model to be followed by all Fraternities and Sororities on campus. Chacho and I were united every step of the way in our work on behalf of the Latino Brotherhood, and until the end in failing health, Chacho remained an extraordinary intellectual force and an unwavering supporter of Lambda Theta Phi, Latin Fraternity, Inc.

At this point, I want to inform you that I have committed myself to keeping this speech short. Next, I will talk briefly about empowerment, discuss our purpose framework, and describe a few challenges in our future.

Empowerment

Throughout my life I have focused on the “here & now”, of course cognizant of the past as a point of reference, but mostly committed to creating opportunities for empowerment in the present. At Kean College, as the first Latino professional counseling psychologist hired (one of my many “firsts” as a Latino professional), I knew that much outreach and empowerment work were needed, though I did not know what shape or direction the work will take. As you all know, the rest is history and there is a book to prove it written by our Brother Jesus Pena!

Helping with the birth and initial development of Lambda Theta Phi as a Latino-Greek fraternity has been one of my proudest achievements. (At the time we did not know that our Latino Greek Brotherhood will be the first of its type in the nation). Now, here together, we are witnesses, owners, leaders, and contributors to the legacy of our Latino-Greek Brotherhood, that is the First, the Best and the Largest, and

with the new slogan, “Leaders of the Latino-Greek Movement”. If that is not empowerment, tell me what is!

Purpose

The continuing success of our Latino Brotherhood has not happened by chance, it is the product of the committed leadership and hard labor by Brothers, working without pay in order to fulfill its purpose.

What is our purpose? Our purpose defines why we are and conveys our beliefs. Other Greek groups have their purpose, but ours is both unique and different. One fundamental belief is creating a sense of belonging. Belonging is a feeling that allows for self-identification that people see as a personal choice for empowerment. Those who decide to join us make the choice because they come to relate and believe in our sets of beliefs. They trust that our belief in a sense of belonging is true and leads to such experiences as unity, respect, brotherhood, culture, and pride, and also to a commitment to inclusion of diversity. These beliefs lead to empowerment because people find in them a sense for self-action, that is, they say to themselves, “what I can do for me as well as what I can do for the fraternity and what the fraternity can do for me are all reciprocal and rewarding”. That is a “win-win” choice! A case in point, ask the Brothers at ?????, the first Latino Greek chapter at a HBCU about their choice.

Our Purpose Framework

In summary, a sense of belonging leads to unity, which leads to respect, that leads to Brotherhood, that leads to culture, that leads to pride, that creates opportunities, which requires engagement, that leads to progress, that leads to success for self, family, friends,, organizations, community, & nation.

To the extend that the future is both uncertain and unpredictable, one thing is for sure, like it or not, we

the Latino people in this country will inherit that future. For sure, Latino immigration will continue unabated...legal & undocumented. Where do you think large numbers of people from Latin America will go looking for opportunities? Here for sure...they are not going in large numbers to Germany or Spain or China, perhaps someday they will go to Canada in large numbers...maybe.

In that future, already approaching faster than we imagine, successful educated Latino leaders will be needed (some of you would be those leaders) to serve as CEOs of industry, become mayors of cities, direct banking institutions, serve as state governors, and national senators, even, as President. Hopefully, many of those leaders will be Latino-Greeks...and a high number of them , Lambda Theta Phi Latinos!

In closing, it is clear that the future will need our leadership. Many higher education institutions need our presence. We should be engaging in coalitions of interests with other Latino Greeks as well as across social, cultural and political organizations on behalf of all. One institution in need of our attention is the penal system where some many of Latinos men are held. Can Lambda Theta Phi play constructive and empowerment roles among jailed Latino men? That is a tricky task...

To end, I have one question: How many of you consider yourself leaders? Show hands. There you have it!

Now, who are we? Leaders! Yes, you are “Leaders of the Latino-Greek Movement!

Thank you